

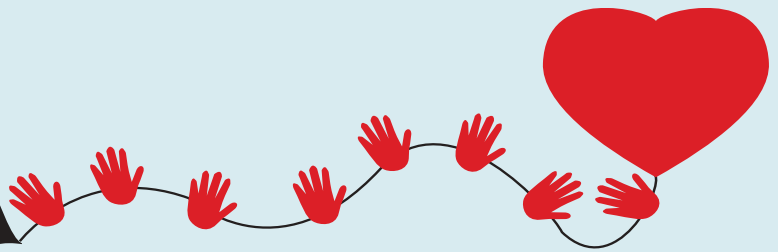


# Maricopa County CASA

Court Appointed Special Advocate Program Newsletter

[www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov](http://www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov)

November 2003



## Conference recap; CASA farewells; National Adoption Celebration

From October 15-17<sup>th</sup>, I had the opportunity to participate in a conference in Austin, Texas facilitated by Casey Family Programs. This conference centered around Casey Family's Independent Living materials, called "It's My Life." Casey Family Programs has spent a lot of time and effort to compile a comprehensive blueprint for the transition of young adults from dependency to adulthood when they must exit the "system" and live on their own. A result of the federal Chafee Act, each state is required to have a plan that addresses how youth will exit the child welfare system, prepared to manage on their own successfully. I attended many seminars on innovative programs in other states that are working to provide these youth with the services they'll need to be successful. I came away very encouraged, but also realizing that Arizona has a long way to go before we can feel confident that we are providing our youth with needed education transition services, employment training, housing and independent living skills resources and training. The State CASA Program Manager and training specialist also attended, and they'll be active in this area in the future, both working with Casey Family Programs, and assessing how the CASA programs throughout the state can be proactive in this area.

How exciting it was to hear that one of the welcoming speakers, Mrs. Christine DeLay, wife of the U.S. House of Representatives Majority Leader, is a CASA volunteer in Texas! I also was thrilled when I attended a session on education and learned that one of the speakers, Thomas Lovitt, Ed.D, Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington, has been involved with the CASA program there for years! Several times during the conference, references to CASA were made, and it made me very proud that CASA is seen in such a positive light throughout the

### Picnic Reminder

Just a little reminder. We will hold our annual picnic, sponsored by the Thetas, at 12 p.m. Nov. 15, in Margaret T. Hance Park.

This event grows bigger and bigger every year! Last year, the Thetas set up games and activities in a carnival setting. The children enjoyed a cake walk, face painting and an inflatable play center. CASA staff cook the hot dogs and hamburgers for all to enjoy. There is always plenty of food. Come and have fun with us!

country.

I wish all of you had been able to see the final panel of youth as they addressed the whole conference. Each youth spoke of one of the "domains" that the conference centered around, i.e. education, health, housing, employment. The youth were well-spoken, honest and forthright in their comments about what it was like growing up in the child welfare system. One young man in particular, speaking of housing issues, broke the audience's heart when he talked about sitting in his studio apartment, funded in part with Chafee federal money. He talked about how he sat there sometimes and felt so unworthy to have the apartment ... who was he to have something like this? While we know that he deserves so much more, he was still caught in the attitude of the foster child, undeserving of this. He broke down on stage, and his case manager came up to talk about some setbacks he had. How hard it is to let the past go and move forward, especially for the youth who must now be on their own. Each of them, to my amazement, was so gracious to thank us, the audience, for what we have done for them. To us, it never seems to be enough. I wish you could have heard these young

people. Know that you do make a difference in their lives. — **Bonnie Marcus, CASA Program Manager**

### Happy Trails!

We are saddened to announce that Otis Evans, our wonderful Office Manager, and LaDonna Benner, our Recruiter extraordinaire, are leaving the CASA program. Otis has accepted a position as a Program Specialist for Foster Care Review Board, and LaDonna is moving to Ohio, where her husband has taken a new position. We will miss you both, and wish you luck in your new endeavors!

### Adoption Celebration

Superior Court in Maricopa County will celebrate adoption on National Adoption Day, November 22.

The celebration will be one of many across the country where courts will open their doors to final adoption hearings including the adoptions of many foster care children. Maricopa County's event will be held from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Southeast Juvenile Court complex, 1810 S. Lewis, Mesa. The public is welcome to come and share in the festivities. As CASAs, we love to support this wonderful event. Hope to see you there!

### Welcome

Maricopa County CASA has grown by one Coordinator with the hiring of Judy Gross for the Durango CASA office.

Judy comes to the CASA program with a wealth of experience from working for 28 years in the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services.

She was involved in working to start a CASA program in Morris County, NJ, so she has always been a supporter of the mission of CASA.

Judy and her husband moved to Arizona six years ago.

## Upcoming Events

**Nov. 7-8, 8 a.m.-4 p.m.**

Orientation Training Weekend  
AZ Supreme Court Building  
1501 W. Jefferson

**Nov. 11**

Veteran's Day  
CASA Office Closed

**Nov. 13, 6 p.m.**

Post Orientation Training  
Durango – Room 223

**Nov. 15, 12 p.m. – 2 p.m.**

Annual CASA/Theta picnic  
Margaret T. Hance Park  
1134 N. Central Ave.

**Nov. 19, 6:30 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.**

Reforming the System Presentation  
AZ Supreme Court Building  
1501 W. Jefferson

**Nov. 20, 12 p.m.- 1:30 p.m.**

Brown Bag w/Judge Scott  
Southeast Facility – Mesa  
The Yucca Room

**Nov. 22, 9 a.m.- 1 p.m.**

National Adoption Day Celebration  
Southeast Facility – Mesa

**Nov. 27**

Thanksgiving Day  
CASA Office Closed

**Dec. 2, 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.**

Special Education Overview  
Southeast Facility – Mesa  
The Yucca Room

**Dec. 6, 7 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

CASA Holiday Party  
Children's Visitation Center  
402 W. Monroe

**Please call the CASA Office for locations and to RSVP for all events.**

## CASA Kudos

### From FCRB

The Foster Care Review Board commended the following CASAs for their continued dedication to the children on their cases:

- Judi Tennien
- John Peterson
- Marshall Porter
- Alan Coffey
- Leah Ruggieri
- Marilou Stanley
- Judy Swartz
- Charlie Johnson
- Patricia Cohen
- Nancy Haines

### From the Court and staff

In court, Judge Cole commended CASA Toni Schulte for the significant number of hours and effort she has dedicated to her case.

### From the CASA Office

Thanks to Judi Tennien, Arizonans For Children has been selected by her

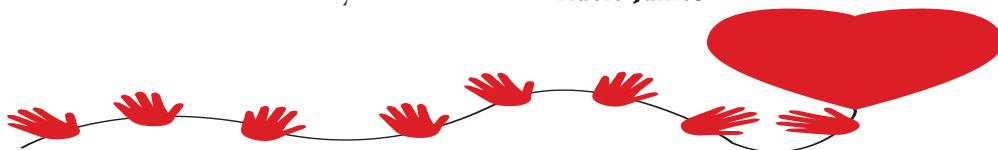
employer to receive "jeans day" funds. Avnet employees who choose to wear jeans pay \$2 for the privilege and Avnet will match the dollars brought in. Way to make it happen!

Thank you to the Orlandos and Marcia Rysdon for hosting peer group meetings. Circumstances are precluding them from continuing, but we appreciate the time and providing their home as a venue.

### From a CASA :

KUDOS! to the CASA staff for presenting such a dynamic, diversified day of training for us. (on October 18, 2003) I found this day to be full of great information to me as a CASA. All the information provided was extremely informative, as well as each presenter. Thank you for providing top-notch training. I wish we could have separate training for each topic so that more information could be covered by each presenter. Again, thanks so much.

— Adele James



## Peer Group Meetings

**Scottsdale** — 1:30 p.m.

Last Wednesday of each month  
Home of Mary Lou Davis

### New Group !

**North Phoenix** — 7 p.m.

Second Thursday of each month.  
Home of Barney Wolfson

**West Valley** — 6:30 p.m.

Second Thursday of each month  
Glendale Public Library  
Host: Donna Spence

**Call the CASA Office for addresses and phone numbers.**

## CASA Contacts

### Durango

3125 West Durango  
Phoenix, AZ 85009  
FAX - 602.506.5512

Leslie Blakley	602.506.4082
Otis R. Evans	602.506.4425
Rita Laird	602.506.4083
Laurie Laughlin	602.506.3934
Bonnie Lodato	602.506.6491
Bonnie Marcus	602.506.5221
La Donna Benner	602.506.3930
Delaine Davis	602.506.4415

### Southeast

1810 South Lewis St.  
Mesa, AZ 85210  
FAX - 602.506.6570

Rita Flores	602.506.3935
Grace Nabor	602.506.3379